

Research Article

Academic Burnout: A Descriptive-Analytical Study of Dimensions and Contributing Factors in Nursing Students

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Abstract

Background: Academic burnout is one of the challenges in nursing education that is particularly important due to the stressful nature of the field. The experience of this phenomenon over the course of the students' education and its persisting effects after graduation lead to poor academic performance, job dissatisfaction, reduced quality of nursing services and even leaving the profession.

Objectives: This study aims to determine the level of academic burnout and examine its contributing factors in nursing students at Qazvin University of Medical Sciences in 2016.

Materials and Methods: The present descriptive-analytical study was conducted on 180 undergraduate nursing students selected through the census method. Data were collected using a personal demographic information form and the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS), and the content validity and internal consistency of the tool were confirmed. Data were analyzed using descriptive and analytical statistics in SPSS-16. The level of statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

Results: The total academic burnout score obtained was 39.2 ± 14.4 , which suggests moderate levels of academic burnout in the students. A total of 67.7% of the students received a moderate academic burnout score. Of all the dimensions of academic burnout, academic inefficacy had the highest mean (16.5 ± 5.91). The academic burnout score had a significant inverse correlation with the variable of GPA ($r = -0.3$, $P < 0.001$) and a significant relationship with the type of residence ($P = 0.001$).

Conclusion: Moderate and high levels of academic burnout in nursing students contribute to a diminishing performance, especially in terms of learning clinical skills. A greater understanding of the factors causing an increase or reduction in academic burnout can therefore help prevent or minimize the occurrence of this phenomenon. Moreover, nursing education planners should take special account of factors such as academic performance, type of residence and level of interest in the discipline.

Keywords: Burnout; Academic burnout; Nursing students; Nursing education

Introduction

To examine the primary sources of burnout, researchers begin seeking their evidence from the 1970s; a syndrome that is caused by a prolonged exposure to high levels of various stresses in the workplace or academic settings, especially among medical and healthcare personnel, which can ultimately affect people's health [1].

As one of the main factors causing reduced academic performance, academic burnout implies a feeling of exhaustion with the school assignments and anything related to studying and encompasses a poor attitude toward class materials that ultimately leads to non-participation in school and educational activities and eventually creates a feeling of inability to learn the course material [2-6].

Academic burnout is highly important in students of medical sciences, since medical education is inherently more challenging

and causes various stresses in the students. Nursing students are no exception to this rule and some of them experience burnout in the course of their education. Academic burnout is distinctly important in nursing students as future nurses, since many freshly-graduated nurses end up experiencing burnout and job dissatisfaction in the clinical settings in which they work due to their previous experience of stress and burnout during their school years, and this phenomenon ultimately results in a reduced quality of nursing services, leaving the nursing profession and eventually the shortage of nurses [7-12].

In general, some of the main factors known to cause academic burnout in nursing students include the full-time programs, entry into clinical settings and encounters with patients and having to perform procedures that may occasionally cause discomfort, fear and distress. Some studies propose personal factors as involved in the experience of burnout or in resistance to it. In one study, Da